

Employment Climate in the Clinical Research Industry

By Norman M. Goldfarb

The author conducted a survey of 15 staffing firms at the Drug Information Association (DIA) Annual Meeting in June 2009. The firms represent a broad cross section of the clinical research industry. Their focus, in general, is on pharmaceutical and contract research organization (CRO) employers, rather than research sites. The largest part of the market is for clinical research associates (CRAs).

The survey question was:

"Compared to this time last year, in clinical research, for your firm, roughly what percentage increase or decrease did you see in the number of open positions and the number of people looking for a new position?"

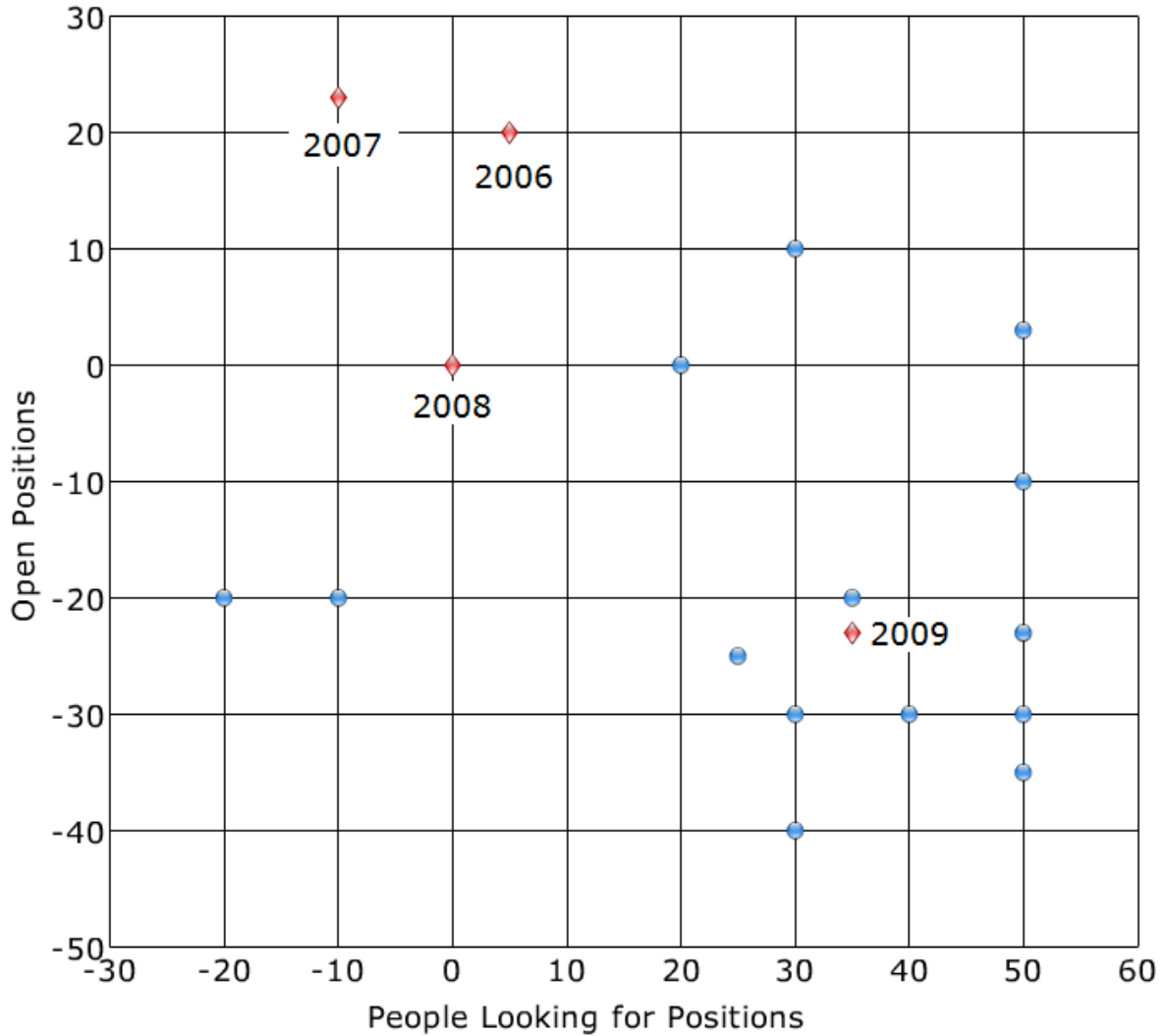
Results of the survey (Figure 1) show that median demand for personnel has declined by 23%, while median supply has increased by 35%. Demand for contract personnel is stronger than for permanent employees. The market may have strengthened a bit recently. The two firms that perceived a decrease in available people attributed it to the risk of taking a new position.

The following staffing firms participated in the survey:

- Aerotek Scientific
- Biophase Solutions
- Delta Pharma
- ExecuPharm
- Joulé
- Kelly Scientific Resources
- Klein Management Systems
- On Assignment
- Placemart
- Recruittech International
- Smith Hanley
- Solomon Page
- SRG Woolf Group
- The Cambridge Group
- The Clinical Resource Network

Website addresses for these firms are available at <http://www.firstclinical.com/directories/staffing.html>.

Figure 1. Change in Supply and Demand for Clinical Research Personnel (2006-2009)
(Red=medians by year; Blue=2009 data points)



Author

Norman M. Goldfarb is Managing Director of First Clinical Research LLC, a provider of clinical research best practices information, consulting and training services. Contact him at 1.650.465.0119 or ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com.